

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 15 and 16 without prejudice to further prosecution in a divisional, continuation, continuation-in-part or other application. Please amend claims 1, 7-9, 12-14, 17, 20 and 21 as follows:

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1. (Currently Amended) A hearing aid system, comprising:
- a hearing aid case configured to be worn behind the ear of a user, the case containing a microphone, a processor unit, and a speaker for delivering amplified sounds to an output connector of the case;
  - a tube having a first end for attaching to the output connector of the case and a second end, the tube having a preformed shape including a first bend extending from the case over the top of the ear of the user and a second bend extending from an outside of the ear into an ear canal of the user; and
  - an eartip connected to the second end of the tube and configured to fit within the ear canal while allowing sounds outside and within the ear to pass through the ear canal around the eartip, wherein [said tube is sufficiently rigid such that a 1 inch segment of said tube is not deflected by less than 0.1 inches by a force of 1 g or less.]
2. (Original) The hearing aid system according to Claim 1, wherein the tube has a rigidity sufficient to hold the ear canal eartip in the ear canal and the case behind the ear.
3. (Original) The hearing aid system according to Claim 1, wherein the first bend is located substantially in a first plane and the second bend is located substantially in a second plane which is approximately perpendicular to the first plane.
4. (Original) The hearing aid system according to Claim 1, wherein the tube is formed of a material having a durometer of about 65 to 85 Shore D.
5. (Original) The hearing aid system according to Claim 1, wherein the tube has an inner diameter of about 0.9 mm or less and an outer diameter of about 1.6 mm or less.

6. (Previously Amended) The hearing aid system according to Claim 1, wherein the hearing aid case including a battery has a mass of 1.5 grams or less.

obj 7. (Currently Amended) The hearing aid system according to claim 1, wherein the case further comprising includes a tube attachment end surface, wherein the output connector further comprises for connecting the case to the tube for delivering amplified sounds from the speaker to the ear canal of the user, the tube attachment end including:  
 an end surface for abutting the first end of the tube;  
 a nipple extending from the tube attachment end surface and configured to be received in the first end of the tube, the nipple having a longitudinal axis;  
 a side surface for abutting a side surface of the tube;  
 a key and a corresponding keyway, said key extending along the side surface in a direction substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of the nipple, the key and corresponding keyway arranged to maintain a specific proper orientation between the case and the tube when the tube is connected to the case.

obj 8. (Currently Amended) The hearing aid system according to Claim 7, wherein the first end of the tube includes said corresponding a connecting member having a keyway configured to receive the key of the case and an opening for receiving the nipple of the case.

9. (Currently Amended) A hearing aid tube for connecting a case of a behind the ear hearing aid to an ear canal eartip, the tube comprising a preformed tube having an outer diameter of about 1.6 mm or less and formed of a sufficiently rigid material with a durometer of about 65 to 85 Shore D that a 1 inch segment of said tube is deflected by less than 0.1 inches by a force of 1 g.

10. (Original) The hearing aid tube according to Claim 9, wherein the tube has a first bend configured to extend over the top of the ear of the user and a second bend configured to extend from an outside of the ear into an ear canal of the user.

11. (Previously Amended) The hearing aid tube according to Claim 10, wherein the tube has been formed at high temperature to retain the first and second bends.

12. (Currently Amended) A hearing aid tube for connecting a case of a behind the ear hearing aid to an ear canal eartip, the tube comprising a preformed tube having an outer diameter of about 1.6 mm or less and formed of a material with a durometer of about 65 to 85 Shore D, wherein the tube has a first bend configured to extend over the top of the ear of the user and a second bend configured to extend from an outside of the ear into an ear canal of the user and the tube is sufficiently rigid that a 1 inch (2.54 cm) segment of the tube is ~~not~~ deflected by less than 0.1 inches (2.54 mm) by a force of 1 gram ~~or less~~.

13. (Currently Amended) A hearing aid case comprising:  
a case body configured to be worn behind the ear of a user, the case body containing a microphone, a processor unit, and a speaker, said case body including an attachment end surface, said microphone located at said attachment end surface;

a battery compartment within the case body; and

~~a tube attachment end for connecting the case body to a hearing aid tube for delivering amplified sounds from the speaker to an ear canal of the user, said hearing aid tube adapted to be inserted within said ear canal; the tube attachment end including:~~

~~an end surface for abutting an end of the hearing aid tube;~~

\* ✓ a nipple extending from the attachment end surface and configured to be received in an the end of the hearing aid tube, the nipple having a longitudinal axis; and

~~a side surface for abutting a side surface of the hearing aid tube; and~~

\* ✓ a key and a corresponding keyway, said key extending along the side surface in a direction substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of the nipple, the key and corresponding keyway arranged to maintain a specific proper orientation between the case body and the hearing aid tube when the hearing aid tube is connected to the case body.

14. (Currently Amended) A hearing aid case, comprising:  
a case body configured to be worn behind the ear of a user, the case body containing a microphone, a processor unit, and a speaker, said case body including an attachment end surface;

a battery compartment within the case; and  
~~a tube attachment end for connecting the case body to a hearing aid tube for~~  
 delivering amplified sounds from the speaker to an ear canal of the user, said hearing aid tube  
adapted to be inserted within said ear canal; the tube attachment end including:  
~~an end surface for abutting an end of the hearing aid tube;~~  
~~a nipple extending from the attachment end surface and configured to be received~~  
 in the end of the hearing aid tube, the nipple having a longitudinal axis;  
~~a side surface for abutting a side surface of the hearing aid tube; and~~  
~~a key extending along the side surface in a direction substantially parallel to the~~  
~~longitudinal axis of the nipple, the key arranged to maintain a proper orientation between the~~  
~~case body and the hearing aid tube when the hearing aid tube is connected to the case body,~~  
~~wherein the nipple includes a~~ an annular retention circumferential ring on said nipple; and  
a recess on an internal surface of said hearing aid tube, wherein said recess and  
said annular retention ring operate cooperatively to retain ~~for retaining~~ the hearing aid tube in a  
 snap fit.

*staves*

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

*maintain* 17. (Currently Amended) A kit of parts for assembling hearing aids, comprising:  
 a plurality of tubes each having a preformed shape including a hook for extending  
 from a hearing aid case over a top of an ear of a user, a run extending from the top of the ear to  
 the ear canal, and an ear canal end extending into the ear canal of the user, wherein the plurality  
 of tubes differ in a length of the run or a length of the ear canal end;  
 a plurality of eartips for connection to the ear canal end of the tubes and  
 configured to fit within the ear canal while allowing sound to pass through the ear canal around  
 the eartip; and  
 a plurality of behind the ear hearing aid cases including different sound  
 processing components the cases having a connection end for connection to the tubes, wherein

each of said plurality of tubes is sufficiently rigid such that a 1 inch segment of each of said plurality of tubes is ~~not~~ deflected by less than 0.1 inches by a force of 1 g ~~or less~~.

18. (Original) The kit of parts according to Claim 17, wherein the plurality of ear canal eartips include at least one of bud-shaped eartips, flower-shaped eartips, webbed-shaped eartips, guppie-shaped eartips, barb-sharped eartips, and dome-shaped eartips.

19. (Original) The kit of parts according to Claim 17, wherein the plurality of ear canal eartips are provided in different sizes.

20. (Currently Amended) A kit of parts for a behind the ear hearing aid comprising:  
 a hearing aid housing containing amplification components;  
 an eartip configured to fit within an ear canal of a user while allowing sound to pass through the ear canal around the eartip;  
 a hearing aid tube having a first end configured to be connected to the hearing aid housing and a second end configured to be inserted into the eartip, wherein said second end of said hearing aid tube includes at least one rib and wherein an internal surface of said eartip includes at least one groove configured to accommodate said at least one rib; and  
 an inserting tool for inserting the second end of the hearing aid tube into the ear canal eartip, the inserting tool comprising:  
~~including~~ an elongated holder;  
~~with an~~ elongated recess within said elongated holder, said elongated recess configured to received a portion of the hearing aid tube adjacent to the second end;  
an end surface of said elongated holder configured to abut said at least one rib in use.

21. (Currently Amended) A hearing aid device, comprising:  
 an eartip adapted to be inserted into a human ear canal and to engage an anatomical structure of the canal; and  
 a tube having a first end adapted to be connected to a source of sound and a second end adapted to be connected to the eartip, the tube shaped to have a hook-shaped portion

which can be engaged with the ear over the top of the ear and a portion which extends into the ear canal, and the tube having sufficient rigidity to position and hold the eartip in the ear canal when the hearing aid device is engaged with the ear, wherein said tube is sufficiently rigid such that a 1 inch segment of said tube is ~~not~~ deflected by less than 0.1 inches by a force of 1 g ~~or less~~.

22. (Original) The hearing aid device according to Claim 21, wherein the eartip has a flower-shape with a plurality of petals extending from a central core configured so that the petals fit around the first bend of the ear canal.

23. (Original) The hearing aid device according to Claim 21, wherein the eartip includes a single blade extending from a central core configured so that the blade fits behind the ear tragus.

24. (Original) The hearing aid device according to Claim 21, wherein the eartip is a conically-shaped member having first cross sectional dimension at a first end which is connected to the tube and a second cross sectional dimension which is larger than the first dimension at a second free end.

25. (Original) The hearing aid device according to Claim 21, wherein the eartip is a dome-shaped member having an annular skirt extending from a central core.

26. (Original) The hearing aid device according to Claim 25, wherein the dome-shaped eartip has a plurality of vent holes.

27. (Original) The hearing aid device according to Claim 21, further comprising a behind the ear hearing aid case attached to the first end of the tube for providing the source of sound.

28. (Original) The hearing aid device according to Claim 27, wherein a portion of the tube between the hearing aid case and the eartip extends over the ear of the user and supports the hearing aid case behind the ear.

29. (Original) The hearing aid device according to Claim 21, wherein the eartip includes a wax guard.

30. (Original) The hearing aid system according to claim 1, wherein said eartip comprises an interior socket with a plurality of internal circular grooves and the second end of said tube comprises a cylindrical member with a plurality of annular ribs on the surface of the cylindrical member, the annular ribs being adapted to be accommodated to the plurality of internal circular grooves.

31. (Original) The kit of parts for assembling hearing aids according to claim 17, wherein each ear canal end of the plurality of tubes comprises a cylindrical member with a plurality of annular ribs on the surface of the cylindrical member and each of the plurality of eartips comprises an interior socket with a plurality of internal circular grooves for accommodating the annular ribs of the ear canal end of one of the plurality of tubes.

32. (Original) The hearing aid device according to Claim 21, wherein said eartip comprises an interior socket with a plurality of internal circular grooves and the second end of said tube comprises a cylindrical member with a plurality of annular ribs on the surface of the cylindrical member, the annular ribs being adapted to be accommodated to the plurality of internal circular grooves.